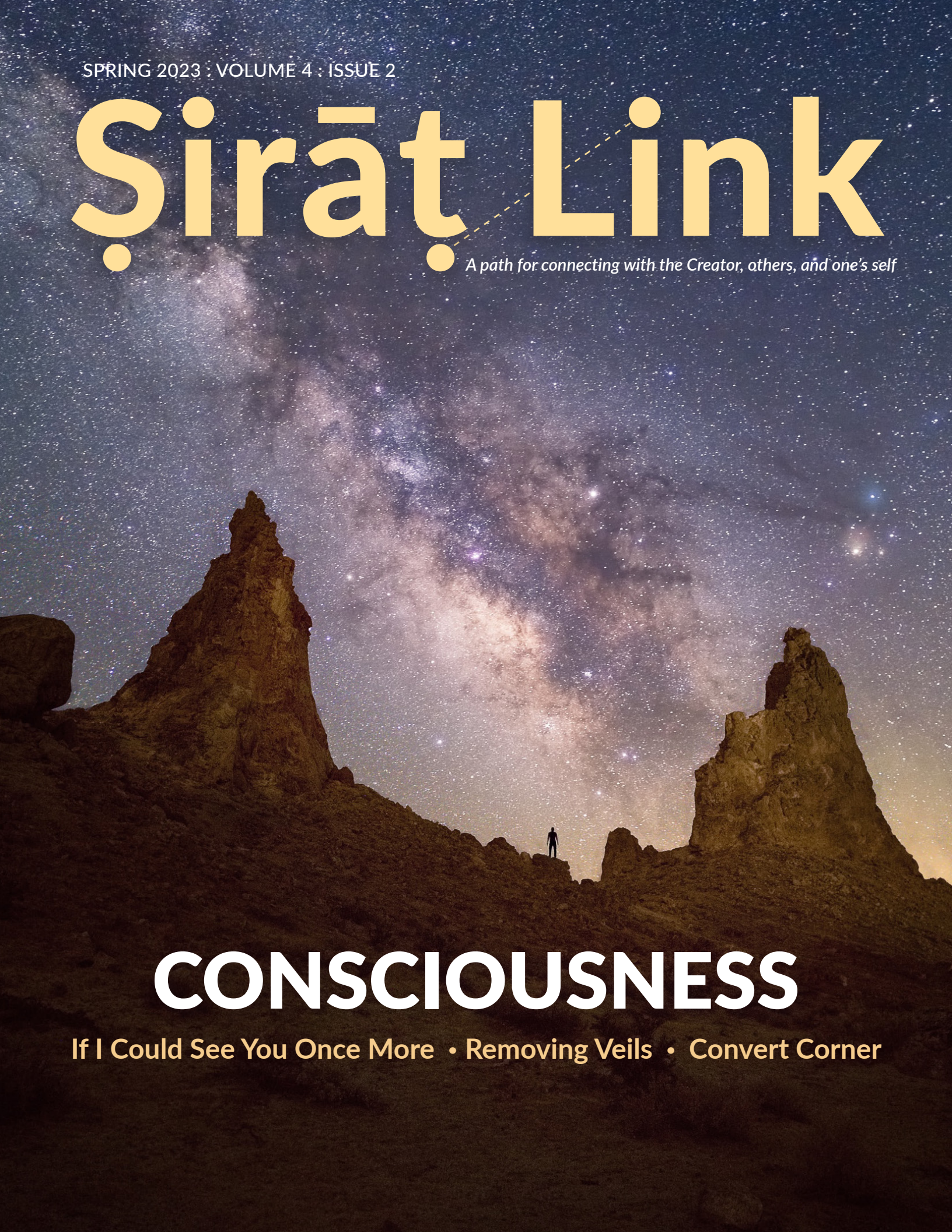
SPRING 2023 : VOLUME 4 : ISSUE 2

Ṣirāṭ Link

A path for connecting with the Creator, others, and one's self



CONSCIOUSNESS

If I Could See You Once More • Removing Veils • Convert Corner

Letter from MOULANA ABIDI

Salāmun ʿAlaykum,

May Allah (swt) bless us, our families, and our communities.

We will soon be entering into the season of sorrow in Muḥarram al-Ḥarām inshāʾAllah.

I extend my sincerest condolences to the Imām of our time, Imām Mahdī (ʿaj), our great *marājiʿ* and scholars, and the Muslim Ummah on the upcoming commemoration of Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) *shahādah* (martyrdom).

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who originated the heavens and the earth, as a ḥanīf (one who is upright), and I am not amongst the polytheists. (6:79)

Dear brothers and sisters, the lessons we can learn from Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) are many but it is good for us to focus on one of these lessons each year, as this can be a ladder of growth and success for us, inshāʾAllah. Therefore the theme for this Muḥarram is *taslīm* (submission) and *iṭāʿah* (obedience). InshāʾAllah by reflecting on these two concepts, we can use the next two months to get closer to Allah (swt) through Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) submission and obedience to Him. As he advanced through each step in Karbalāʾ, his submission and obedience to Allah (swt) grew stronger.

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Ṣirāṭ Link

A 2nd Chance Books Publication

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

For the love of Him, they feed the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner.

(Noble Qurʾān 76:8)

2nd Chance Books is a non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, tools for rehabilitation, and a support system. By responding to their numerous questions about Islam, they gain a more thorough understanding of the religion. So far, 2nd Chance has distributed over 20,000 books to inmates across the country.

Among 2nd Chance's most recent initiatives is Ṣirāṭ Link, a quarterly magazine. The title Ṣirāṭ Link, inspired by the Arabic term Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm which means the right path, presents this magazine as a means of guidance to a better connection to Allah, as well as offering the opportunity for connections with the broader community, and the improvement of one's self. InshāʾAllāh it can also serve as an opportunity for growing one's faith through education.

This magazine will be under the guidance and oversight of Moulana Nabi Raza Mir Abidi, Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Center, and several other scholars and experts.

***Taslīm* (Submission)**

Taslīm, or submission, is defined as the belief and act of yielding to a superior force. Upon reflection, here is how we can examine submission in Islam:

Who and what are we submitting to?
We are submitting to Allah (swt) and His riḍā (contentment and pleasure)

What are we submitting?
We are submitting our desires

Why are we submitting?
We are submitting because He is the Almighty Allah, who is our Lord and Nurturer. He is the Most Knowledgeable, who knows what is best for us and can fulfill our every need. He is the Most Powerful, who has the ability to protect us. He is the Most Merciful, who loves us and, therefore, will do everything to make us successful in this world and the next and protect us from every evil. Therefore, who better to submit to than *al-Ḥakīm*, the Most Wise?

Submitting wholeheartedly will plant and strengthen the seed of obedience in our hearts. At a basic level, obedience is simply performing our *wājibāt* (mandatory responsibilities) and refraining from the *muḥarramāt* (forbidden acts). On the second level, obedience is giving priority to Allah's instructions. For example, we put our ṣalāh time, our periodic check-ins with Allah (swt), on the top of our to-do lists. Obedience is living a Godly life, where we have *ḥusn al-ẓan* (a positive outlook) of Allah. On a deeper level, true obedience is accepting anything Allah (swt) chooses for us with happiness, trust, and complete submission.

This true obedience and submission is demonstrated through Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) final sacrifice of his infant son, ʿAlī al-Asghar, when he said:

رِضًا بِقَضَائِهِ وَ تَسلِيمًا لِاَمرِهِ

I am pleased with Allah's plan and submit to His will

SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF:

SHAHR SHAWWĀL		
1st	Eid ul-Fiṭr	*April 21, 2023
25th	Death anniversary of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa)	*May 15th, 2023
SHAHR DHUL QAʿDAH		
11th	Birth anniversary of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa)	*May 31st, 2023
29th	Death anniversary of Imām Muḥammad at-Taqī al-Jawād (ʿa)	*June 18th, 2023
SHAHR DHUL ḤIJJAH		
9th	Day of ʿArafah	*June 27th, 2023
10th	Eid ul-ʾAḍḥā	*June 28th, 2023
15th	Birth anniversary of Imām ʿAlī an-Naqī al-Hādī (ʿa)	*July 3rd, 2023
18th	Eid ul-Ghadīr	*July 6th, 2023
20th	Birth anniversary of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa)	*July 8th, 2023
24th	Eid ul-Mubāhalah	*July 12th, 2023
SHAHR MUḤARRAM		
2nd	Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his caravan arrive in Karbalāʾ	*July 20th, 2023
9th	Eve of ʿĀshūrāʾ- Tāsūʿāʾ	*July 27th, 2023
10th	Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ: death anniversary of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), male family members, and companions	*July 28th, 2023
25th	Death anniversary of Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa)	*August 12th, 2023

*Please note the above Gregorian dates are only estimates. The dates are subject to change based on moon sighting, upon which the Islamic calendar is based.

If we are able to adapt the following ideologies, this will strengthen our obedience and submission to Allah (swt):

- Remind ourselves and realize that He knows best even when we don't understand something initially.
- Keep the bigger picture of the purpose of life in our minds and trust Him even when circumstances in our lives take an unexpected turn.
- When we strive and pray for something, trust Him. After all, He knows our needs best.

Continued on the next page

When we recite Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ, let not the words "*Allahumā jʿal maḥyāyā maḥyā Muḥammad wa ālī Muḥammad*" (O Allah (swt), let me live the life of Muḥammad (ṣ) and the family of Muḥammad (ṣ)) linger solely on our tongues. Let's actualize these words through our actions. Let us not simply ask Allah (swt) to grant us *Maqām al-Maḥmūd* — the highest and most praiseworthy status — but let us strive toward earning this prestigious rank through our righteous deeds. Let us emulate the companions of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) by striving toward righteousness and higher levels of taqwā.

Brothers and sisters, these two months that we've been gifted are *khazāʾin al-ilāhī* — Godly treasures. So, let us invest these treasures, and not let them go to waste. This is the best time to reflect and act. Let our actions be purposeful. Let us become his true ambassadors during these months and fly high the flag of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and Ḥaḍrat ʿAbbās on behalf of Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj). We must use these two months as an opportunity to improve ourselves and become true servants of our Lord. On these nights, let us have fruitful discussions where we reflect upon and discuss what we have learned from the lessons of Karbalāʾ.

Let this global vision allow us to remember and sincerely pray for all those who are being oppressed around the world, especially our Muslim brothers and sisters who are being oppressed in Kashmir, Yemen, Burma, Syria, Palestine, Bahrain, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, here, and everywhere else in the world!

We pray that Allah (swt) gives us the tawfīq to actualize our duties and responsibilities. Brothers and sisters let us and our families be insured with the best of insurances, the love and guidance of Imām al-Ḥusayn (ʿa).

With Duʿās

Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Islamic Center

If I Could See You Once More

If I could see you once more

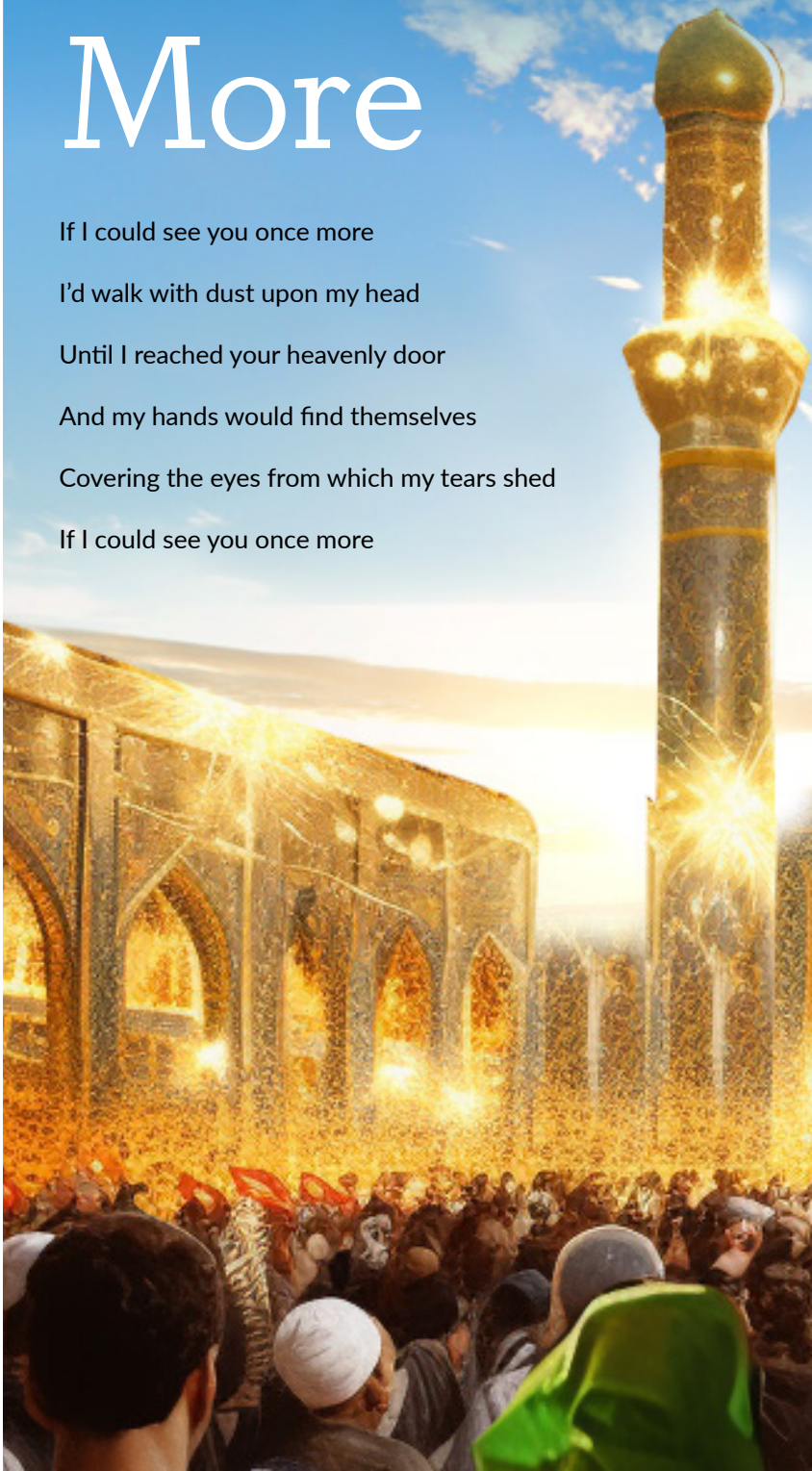
I'd walk with dust upon my head

Until I reached your heavenly door

And my hands would find themselves

Covering the eyes from which my tears shed

If I could see you once more



I'd come with my heart undone

Until I reached your heavenly door

And my lips would find themselves

Proclaiming the truth of the One

If I could see you once more

I'd hang my head low from the burden of sins

Until I reached your heavenly door

And my sins would find themselves

Falling into the prostration of forgiveness

If I could see you once more

I'd serve with every ounce of my soul

Until I reached your heavenly door

And my soul would find itself

Both lost and found in what remains left

For I feel a servant, but also royalty

To be in any way associated with your beauty

If I could see you once more

I'd give all that I had away

Until I reached your heavenly door

So that I may be forever able to stay

And not need to reminisce

On times before, on past visits

Yes, if only, I could see you once more...

*The line – *"If I could see you once more"* refers to the walk from Najaf to Karbala –how the heart aches to walk once again the journey of miseries and miracles, to reach the destination of heaven at the sight of the sand of Karbalāʾ and the dome of our beloved Imām al-Ḥusayn (ʿa)

REMOVING VEILS TO ALLAH

By Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau

A lot of people go through life aimlessly not knowing where they came from, or where they are going, wandering around with no real purpose in life. It is in the innate nature of every human being to know and recognize their Creator, which is the true purpose of everyone's life on this Earth. However, this innate knowledge of Allah (swt) can easily become clouded by sins, one's surroundings, and above all, influences of a corrupt society.

This innate knowledge can never be wiped away completely, but it can become repressed through acquired knowledge that is false or aimless. Sometimes, different outlets in a society will try to use various satanic tricks of placing doubts in one's mind through the tool of propaganda. Alternatively, if in a community or a society, in which true knowledge is shared, then it may spark something within a person to allow the innate nature to be recalled once again. Sometimes, experiences can be a conduit to rekindling that innate knowledge linking us back to Allah (swt).

Times of hardships can bring out this innate nature that might have been buried deep within a person. For example, if you are drowning and there is no one to aid you, you will search for someone to help you, but when you realize that there is absolutely no one to assist you in the wide open sea, then you will sincerely call out to Allah (swt) to save you. Something within you will awaken and say that there is a higher Power that can help you, and this higher Power is none other than Almighty Allah (swt).

When we look into history, we see that Pharaoh was one of the worst of the atheists, but when the sea was split by Prophet

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Yūnus (10), Verse 90

2 ʿ Allāmah Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 70, P. 64.

3 Āmidī, Ghurar al-Ḥikam, P. 226

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt (79), Verses 40-41

5 Shaykh Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, Vol. 1, P. 16.

Mūsā [Moses] (ʿa) and the water was about to crash down upon him and he was going to be drowned, he admitted and professed that now he believes in the Lord of Prophet Mūsā (ʿa) and his brother, Prophet Hārūn [Aaron] (ʿa).[1] This was brought as an example to show that this innate knowledge of Allah (swt) is even found within those who have sinned the most, and it will often manifest itself during times of extreme hardship.

We all have the potential to be great, and gain closeness to Allah (swt). However, in order to gain proximity to Allah (swt), we must purify ourselves. Everyone has an inner struggle that one must go through in this life which will be detrimental or beneficial in the afterlife - it is a struggle of good against evil that each person engages in on a daily basis. This struggle against one's self is termed as the greatest struggle *(jihād al-akbar)*, and it is even greater and harder than the physical fighting on the battlefield for the right cause.

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ (ص): أَعْدَى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِيْ بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ.

The Noble Prophet (ṣ) said: *"Your greatest enemy is yourself, which is located between your two sides."* [2]

قَالَ الإمامُ عليٌّ (عَلَيهِ السَّلامُ) : إنَّ النَّفْسَ لأمّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ وَ الفَحْشاءِ فَمَنِ ائْتَمَنَهَا خَانَتْهُ وَ مَنِ اسْتَنَامَ إلَيْهَا أهْلَكَتْهُ وَ مَنْ رَضِيَ عَنْهَا أوْرَدَتْهُ شَرَّ المَوارِدِ

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) said: *"The self (nafs) commands you to indulge in evil deeds and indecency; therefore, whoever trusts the self - it will deceive them; whoever believes in the self - it will destroy them; and whoever is satisfied with the self - it will lead them to face the worst kind of circumstances."* [3]

The human self is a valuable and precious jewel which should be carefully guarded - if it becomes cloudy through an abundance of sins, then one must polish it with repentance. By understanding the value of this soul, we begin to shift our focus from repentance to reforming ourselves through our better thoughts and good actions. We should maintain its cleanliness and constantly ask Allah (swt) to help us.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ.

Allah (swt) says in the Noble Qurʾān: *"But as for him who is awed to stand before his Lord and restrains his soul from [following] desires, his refuge will indeed be paradise."*[4]

How can we reform ourselves and overcome our desires?

1. We must train ourselves by learning the beliefs, teachings, and rulings from the Noble Qurʾān and the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa). It is through the Noble Qurʾān and the sayings of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) that we can gain understanding of how to live in a way that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (ṣ). We always ask Allah (swt) to guide us to the right path, but we must put in a sincere effort to search for that way, and when we find it we must follow it. What good is it if we ask Allah (swt) to guide us to become a doctor, but yet we never study how to become one? We will not achieve any desired results without the effort and actively striving toward our goals. We must invest in ourselves in this world in order to have a righteous life in the hereafter - this is an investment that will surely pay off and be of more value than any riches this world has to offer.
2. We must use our reason (*ʿaql*) to overcome our selfish desires. If reason becomes the ruling authority of the human body and takes control of the passions of the self, then it will govern it in the best manner. This control will arrange everything in a proper order, so that one may achieve perfection by ascending toward Allah (swt).

Fasting is one way in which a person can train oneself to tame the selfish desires. When we work on gaining control of our desires in one arena, then it will translate into being able to better control our other desires, such as anger or lust, which urge us to commit *ḥarām* (sinful) actions. This can be achieved through discipline.

قَالَ مُوسَى بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ الكَاظِم (ع): يَا هِشَام! إنَّ لِلّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجَّتَيْنِ: حُجَّةً ظَاهِرَةً وَحُجَّةً بَاطِنَةً فَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَةُ فَالرُّسُلُ وَالأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالأَئِمَّةُ وَأَمَّا البَاطِنَةُ فَالعُقُول

Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa) said to Hishām: *"O Hishām! Allah has blessed people with two proofs: One is apparent, and one is hidden. The apparent proofs are the Prophets (ʿa) and the Imāms (ʿa); and the hidden proof is the reason (or intellect)."* [5]

3. We must make it a habit to look at the end results of our actions in order to help make the correct decisions. Will this action please Allah (swt), or will it bring about His displeasure? Also, what will the 12th Imām (ʿaj) say when he sees this action of mine?

قَالَ أَمِيرُ المُؤْمِنِيْن (ع): التَّدْبِيْرُ قَبْلَ العَمَلِ يُؤْمِنُ مِنَ النَّدَم.

The Commander of the Faithful (Imām ʿAlī) (ʿa) said: *"Thinking about the ultimate consequences before (you perform) any action will make you safe against regret."*[6]

4. When we become sick, we go to a physician to get a diagnosis and necessary treatment; similarly, we must consult the spiritual physicians to get treatment for our inner illnesses. We should go to those scholars of ethics who have been successful in carrying out the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) in purifying themselves. Once we have found out what our spiritual diseases and shortcomings are, we must then ask for forgiveness from Allah (swt) and strive our best to work on their cures.

5. Having a good friend can help support a person in reforming themselves and staying on the right track. There is a beautiful tradition from the Noble Prophet (ṣ) where he quotes Prophet ʿĪsā [Jesus] (ʿa) who said to his disciples: *"Sit with someone who upon seeing them makes you remember Allah, their logic adds to your knowledge, and their (good) practices make you incline [to strive] for the hereafter."* [7]

This is very important because when a person has God-conscious friends they will remind one another about what is pleasing to Allah (swt); and what one should stay away from; and they can help prevent each other from drifting off the right path, God-willing.

6. Learning from the faults of others. When a human being sees a certain defect in others, instead of focusing on that person's shortcomings or criticizing them, the individual should investigate one's own inner self and see if one is contaminated with that same fault or not. In the case that one finds that defect in oneself, they should look for its cure. In this way, a person can learn a lesson from the faults of others.

قَالَ رَسُولُ الله (ص): السَّعِيدُ مَنْ وُعِظَ بِغَيْرِهِ.

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said: *"Fortunate is the person who learns a lesson from the faults of others."* [8]

7. Self-reflection and taking account of ourselves daily. A person should spend some time every day reflecting on the sins that one committed. In particular, how these misdeeds can be prevented or eliminated in the future with careful planning through practical step taking. Be watchful of all of your thoughts which lead to actions, even in solitude. Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa) said: *"O son of Ādam! You will always be your best, as long as you have an admonishing inner self; and as long as you are anxious to take your own account; and as long as the fear of Allah (swt) is your norm, and sorrow (over your lapses) is your garment. O son of Ādam! Surely, you will die one day, and you will be resurrected and made to stand before Allah, the All-High, and be questioned. So, prepare to [be able to] answer (Him)."* [9]

Consider the advice above as humble suggestions from one servant of Allah (swt) to another. We always turn to Allah (swt) and ask for guidance in that which we do not know and courage to act upon that which we do know. May Allah (swt) make your journey to Him a beautiful one and give you the constant companionship of Him and His beloved Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa).

6 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 71, P. 338.

7 Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥarrānī, Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl, Chapter on the Maxims of the Prophet, Ḥadīth #6.

8 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 71, P. 324.

9 Shaykh Mufīd, Al-Amālī, P. 209.

SAFEGUARDING THE EFFECTS OF THE MONTH OF RAMAḌĀN

QUESTION: What should we do to better safeguard the effects and blessings of the month of Ramaḍān within ourselves?

ANSWER: Without a doubt, an entire month of fasting and constant struggle of self improvement has deep spiritual benefits on a human being's soul and physical health. However, what should we do so that our fasting has lasting effects on our lives and souls?

The first thing that we must do is try to make sure that our fast is complete and proper. When we do this, the effects of our fast will last until the next year and beyond.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) has said:

"When you are fasting, you must keep your eyes and ears far away from that which is forbidden (ḥarām), and your organs and limbs must be purified from indecencies. You must stay away from useless and vain actions. You must possess the forbearance, dignity, and respect of a person who is truly fasting because one who is truly fasting is completely attentive and careful in all areas of one's life. They are mindful that even the smallest religious, non-religious, or behavioral (akhlāqī) shortcoming is not present in them. An individual who is fasting must choose to be silent whenever possible, except when one is in remembrance of Allah or voicing one's needs. Avoid boisterous and loud laughing when fasting because Allah dislikes such laughing."[1]

From this tradition, we understand that a true fast is not only the avoidance of food and drink. Rather, when we are truly fasting, all of our organs and limbs must also be fasting. Such a fast is complete and will naturally have lasting effects. There are two other important things which must be done in order for the effects of our fast to be lasting:

Avoid those things which will destroy the effects of one's fast; as we know that the ultimate goal of fasting is to attain God-consciousness (taqwā). Therefore, if we want to benefit from the true and lasting effects of fasting, then our actions must be consistent with the avoidance of sins.

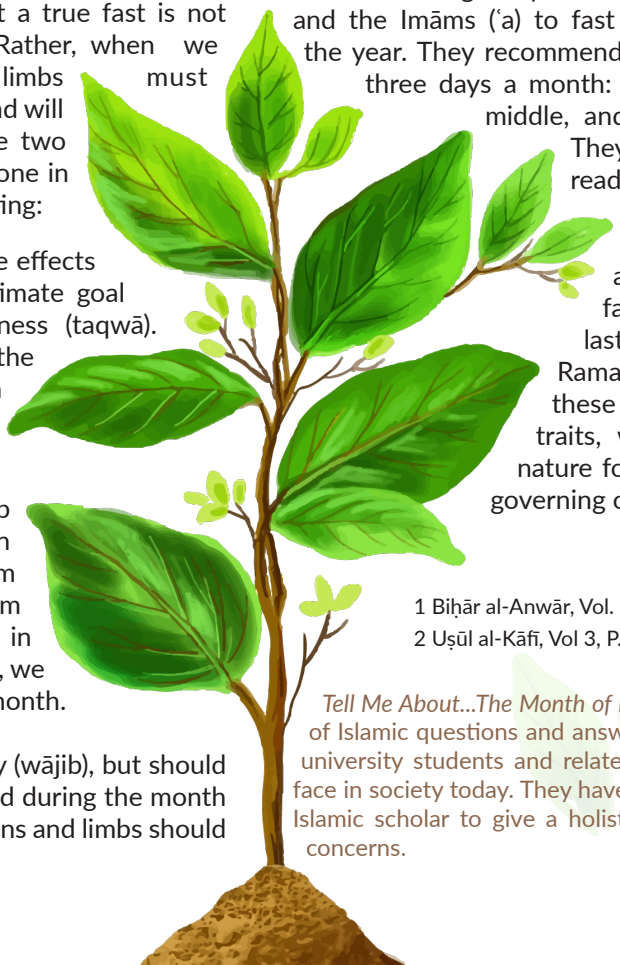
We must not cut off our acts of worship when the month of Ramaḍān ends. In other words, we must continue to perform those good deeds that we used to perform during this sacred month. For example, in order to strengthen the effects of fasting, we must sometimes fast outside of this holy month.

These fasts of course are not compulsory (wājib), but should have the same quality as a fast performed during the month of Ramaḍān - meaning that all of our organs and limbs should also fast. Try and continue the recitation and understanding of the Qurʾān. It is steadfastness and perseverance in these kinds of actions which will result in the lasting effects of our self-development.

Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa) said:

"An action which is the most beloved to Allah is that which His servant performs consistently, even if it is done in small increments."[2]

Therefore, it has been highly recommended that after the month of Ramaḍān, we should sometimes fast and regularly recite the Qurʾān, even if we are only able to read one page of the Qurʾān a day. We should also read the duʿās which are specific to each day or month on a regular basis. It was always the custom of great personalities such as the Prophet (ṣ) and the Imāms (ʿa) to fast on various days throughout the year. They recommend that we should fast at least three days a month: in the beginning, during the middle, and at the end of the month. They also advise that we should read at least 50 verses (āyāt) of the Qurʾān on a daily basis. These recommendations and advices are to help facilitate the continuation and lasting effects of the month of Ramaḍān. They may also help turn these spiritual habits into character traits, which then become second nature for a believer and will assist in governing one's actions for the better.



1 Biḥār al-Anwār, Vol. 96, P. 292.
2 Uṣūl al-Kāfī, Vol 3, P. 129.

Tell Me About...The Month of Ramadan is a textual compilation of Islamic questions and answers that are commonly asked by university students and relate to many of the issues that we face in society today. They have been addressed by a prominent Islamic scholar to give a holistic and spiritual answer to their concerns.

Convert Corner

By Sarah Silvaggi

No one chooses to change their religion: meaning that no one wakes up one morning and just decides to choose a different journey for themselves **without** a sense of deep contemplation and understanding. Simply because it is an incredible challenge to go against the grain of your friends, family, community, and society. Everyone will have their own opinions and things that they want to say to you - they will try to convince you that you are wrong to take a different path than the one that was set up for you. Yet while we may have a plan, Allah (swt) is the Best of Planners. The journey to Islam is never an easy one - standing at the fork in the road - and choosing a path that you may have to walk upon all alone, yet upon taking that first step, true piety or God-consciousness *(taqwā)* will be born. This journey is one that isn't momentous per say in life's biggest tests and challenges, but is found in moments - from moment to moment, minute to minute, we are choosing what path to take.

Taqwā basically means doing what Allah (swt) commands us to do, and refraining from what He has forbidden us to do; and this is a central concept that has frequently been mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān, especially in verses that deal with individual behavior in social relations. Perhaps this is why we see the concept of *taqwā* in many stories of returning to Allah (swt). It is a prerequisite for a person who wants to live one's life by certain principles, whether they are religious or not. They have a clear direction, and want to move toward a goal - in this case - understanding a particular religion. They want to have a better understanding of how and why they need a moral compass. Therefore, *taqwā* in a broader sense is a requirement for everyone who wants to be a true human being, live under the control of reason, and follow certain principles.

"Piety is not to turn your faces to the East or the West; rather, piety is [personified by] those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and who give their wealth, for the love of Him, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler and the beggar, and for [the freeing of] the slaves, and maintain the prayer and give the zakat, and those who fulfill their covenants, when they pledge themselves, and those who are patient in stress and distress, and in the heat of battle. They are the ones who are true [to their covenant], and it is they who are the Godwary."[1]

Surrounding the idea of *taqwā*, comes the story of Khadījah, a convert to Islam, who always had and adhered to *taqwā*, but could not put it into words or actions until she was introduced to Islam. Born in Florence, Italy in 1974, she was always fond of Philosophy. This love for Philosophy at the age of 15 inclined her to reject Christianity, and study Marxism, which on a philosophical level persuaded her. She began to study the works of Spinoza, Diderot, Hegel, Marx, and Lukacs. However, within these books she could still not find the connection that she was searching for deep down; as she puts it: *"The rational core of truth."* In her quest for truth she began to read the Noble Qurʾān, the Bible, and the Zoroastrian Avesta.

"I loved the Holy Qurʾān so much! Compared to other religious books it was the most sensible, and also the most beautiful."

In our interview with Khadījah, she told us: *"I loved the Holy Qurʾān so much! Compared to other religious books it was the most sensible, and also the most beautiful. But I did not say that I am Muslim yet."* One could question how a person can read Philosophy, various religious books, along with the Noble Qurʾān, and not convert to Islam? This is where our navigation and decision to truly take that step off of our beaten path comes into play. Although it may be easy to find the beauty in Islam, our true test is to follow the Straight Path despite all of the troubles and tribulations that will come along the way.

"Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."[2]

In Italy at that time, there were very few Muslims, and Islam was very much associated with Arab culture. Khadijāh became interested in politics and social activities within her own community. Wanting to improve her community, she became active in order to be able to assist and support her community in the best way she knew how. At that time, being involved in politics, and enrolled in the university there for a degree in Moral Philosophy, she still considered herself to be Agnostic - knowing that a Higher Power existed, but still not knowing how to reach that Lord. In 2004, she was blessed to be able to go on a trip to Iran, despite not having converted to Islam yet at that time. It was not until she was in Iran that she saw Shīʿah Islam for the very first time. As a legal requirement for women's dress code in Iran, she wrapped a simple scarf around her head. With just this small symbol, it took her heart from being Agnostic to gaining her God-consciousness *(taqwā)* that she knew was buried deep within her. Upon her return to Italy, she knew at that moment that Islam was the truth that she had been searching for all this time.

"At that point, I knew very, very little about Islam itself. I had read the Noble Qurʾān in a dubious translation (Bausati's one: beautiful, but inaccurate). I knew the basic history of Islam and its origin, but nothing about how to pray. I searched for a 'mosque' in my city, and I found the contact of one, so I went there, and after a while I took my shahādah (profession of faith) in that small, all Arab community. They were Sunnī Muslims, but I did not know the difference."

Upon gaining more knowledge, it was obvious for Khadījah that after Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ), the next rightful successor was Imām ʿAlī (ʿa). Fortunately, there was a sister from the Mālikī school of thought supporting the same view as her when it came to the concept of Imamate. Allah (swt) sent a supporter at the right time, and from this sister, Khadījah grew closer to the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa). Unfortunately, the majority of those who were around her did not agree with her inclining toward the Jaʿfarī school of thought. They told her: *"How come you became a Muslim with us, but now you are a Shīʿah?!"* Finally they kicked her out by saying that it is a Sunnī mosque. Meanwhile, she became aware of a Shīʿah community in Roma. She began to attend a mosque there where she wanted to take the *shahādah* again, but they told her: *"You are already a Muslim, you do not need to repeat it. We welcome you into the Shīʿah community."* At this moment, she found her peace.

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) said: One who follows the path of obedience to Allah attains something greater [than what he would get by following other paths].[3]

1 *Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 177*

2 *Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt (49), Verse 13*

3 *Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Ḥadīth #5588*

Ziyārat al-Arba'īn

Introduction: *Ziyārah* is a supplication in which salutations and greetings are sent to Noble individuals. In this case, this is a set of lines that we recite upon the fortieth day of the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). This is incredibly unique in the sīrah of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) for this is a tradition that is not associated with any other *maʿṣūm or immaculate being*, except Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). His life and his martyrdom - entirely for the sake of Allah (swt) - is of such lofty and high status that he is worthy of being offered respects not only on the day of his martyrdom but again, forty days later. Today, in modern times, millions of people walk, fly, and bus every year to Karbalāʾ, Iraq where Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is buried to pay their respects in person. When we cannot make it in person, we can face the city of Karbalāʾ, which is in the same direction of the qiblah in the United States, and recite this greeting sincerely from our hearts.

Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) said:

"If one of our Shīʿah goes for Imām Ḥusayn's ziyārah (visitation), then he will not return but that all his sins will be forgiven. For every step that he or his mount takes, 1,000 virtues are written for him, 1,000 sins are forgiven and his status is elevated by a 1,000 degrees."

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ وَلِيِّ ٱللهِ وَحَبِيبِهِ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ خَلِيلِ ٱللهِ وَنَجِيبِهِ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ صَفِيِّ ٱللهِ وَٱبْنِ صَفِيِّهِ. اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ ٱلْمَظْلُومِ ٱلشَّهِيدِ.

Assalāmu ʿalā waliyyil-lāhi wa ḥabībih. Assalāmu ʿalā khalīlil-lāhi wa najībih. Assalāmu ʿalā ṣafiyyil-lāhi wab-ni ṣafiyyih. Assalāmu ʿalal-Ḥusaynil-maẓlūmish-shahīd.

Peace be upon the intimate servant of Allah and His most beloved. Peace be upon the beloved friend of Allah and His elite. Peace be upon the chosen one by Allah and the son of His chosen one. Peace be upon Ḥusayn, the oppressed and martyred.

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ أَسِيرِ ٱلْكُرُبَاتِ وَقَتِيلِ ٱلْعَبَرَاتِ. اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّهُ وَلِيُّكَ وَٱبْنُ وَلِيِّك، وَصَفِيُّكَ وَٱبْنُ صَفِيِّك، ٱلْفَائِزُ بِكَرَامَتِك.

Assalāmu ʿalā asīril-kurubāt, wa qatīlil-ʿabarāt. Allāhumma innī ashhadu annahu waliyyuka wab-nu waliyyik, wa ṣafiyyuka wab-nu ṣafiyyik, alfāʾizu bikarāmatik.

Peace be upon the hostage surrounded by the tightening circle of sorrow and grief, killed by a horde of savages. O Allah, I do bear witness that he is verily Your intimate servant, son of Your intimate servant, Your chosen one and the son of Your chosen one; the one who is honored by Your grace.

أَكْرَمْتَهُ بِالشَّهَادَةِ وَحَبَوْتَهُ بِالسَّعَادَة، وَٱجْتَبَيْتَهُ بِطِيبِ ٱلْوِلَادَة، وَجَعَلْتَهُ سَيِّدًا مِنَ ٱلسَّادَة، وَقَائِدًا مِنَ ٱلْقَادَة، وَذَائِدًا مِنَ ٱلذَّادَة، وَأَعْطَيْتَهُ مَوَارِيثَ ٱلأَنْبِيَاء، وَجَعَلْتَهُ حُجَّةً عَلَىٰ خَلْقِكَ مِنَ ٱلأَوْصِيَاء.

Akramtahu bish-shahādati wa ḥabawtahu bis-saʿādah, waj-tabaytahu biṭīṭbil-wilādah, wa jaʿaltahu sayyidan minas-sādah, wa qāʾidan minal-qādah, wa dhāʾidan minadh-dhādah, wa aʿṭaytahu mawārithal-anbiyāʾ, wa jaʿaltahu ḥujjatan ʿalā khalqika minal-awṣiyāʾ.

You have honored him with martyrdom, endued him with happiness, privileged him with legitimate birth, made him one of the chiefs, one of the leaders, and one of the defenders (of Your religion), gave him the inheritances of the Prophets, and chose him as proof over Your created beings, from the Prophets' successors.

فَأَعْذَرَ فِي ٱلدُّعَاءِ وَمَنَحَ ٱلنُّصْحَ وَبَذَلَ مُهْجَتَهُ فِيكَ لِيَسْتَنْقِذَ عِبَادَكَ مِنَ ٱلْجَهَالَةِ وَحَيْرَةِ ٱلضَّلَالَةِ

Fa aʿdhara fid-duʿāʾi wa manaḥan-nuṣḥa wa badhala muhjatahu fīka liyastanqidha ʿibādaka minal-jahālati wa ḥayratiḍ-ḍalālah.

So, he called to You flawlessly, gave advice, and sacrificed his soul for You to save Your servants from ignorance and the perplexity of misguidance.

وَقَدْ تَوَازَرَ عَلَيْهِ مَنْ غَرَّتْهُ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَبَاعَ حَظَّهُ بِٱلأَرْذَلِ ٱلأَدْنَىٰ وَشَرَىٰ آخِرَتَهُ بِالثَّمَنِ ٱلأَوْكَسِ وَتَغَطْرَسَ وَتَرَدَّىٰ فِي هَوَاهُ وَأَسْخَطَكَ وَأَسْخَطَ نَبِيَّكَ وَأَطَاعَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ أَهْلَ ٱلشِّقَاقِ وَٱلنِّفَاقِ وَحَمَلَةَ ٱلأَوْزَارِ ٱلْمُسْتَوْجِبِينَ ٱلنَّار.

Wa qad tawāzara ʿalayhi man gharrat-huddunyā wa bāʿa ḥaẓẓahu bil-ardhalil-adnā wa sharā ākhiratahu bith-thamanil-awkasi wa taghaṭrasa wa taraddā fī hawāhu wa askhaṭaka wa askhaṭa nabiyyaka wa aṭāʿa min ʿibādika ahlash-shiqāqi wan-nifāqi wa ḥamalatal-awzāril-mustawjibīnan-nār.

Yet, those who were seduced by this worldly life, who sold their share (of reward) to the lowliest and meanest, united against him and sold their Hereafter with the cheapest price. They perished because of following their desires, brought to themselves Your wrath and the wrath of Your Prophet, and obeyed from Your servants those who are dissident and hypocritical and the bearers of the burdens (of sins) who deserve Hellfire.

فَجَاهَدَهُمْ فِيكَ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا حَتَّىٰ سُفِكَ فِي طَاعَتِكَ دَمُهُ وَٱسْتُبِيحَ حَرِيـمُه. ٱللَّهُمَّ فَالْعَنْهُمْ لَعْنًا وَبِيلًا وَعَذِّبْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيما

Fajāhadahum fīka ṣābiran muḥtasiban ḥattā sufika fī ṭāʿatika damuhu wastubīḥa ḥarīmuh. Allāhumma fal-ʿanhum laʿnan wabīlan wa ʿadhdhibhum ʿadhāban alīmā.

However, he fought against them painstakingly with steadfastness expecting Your reward until, in Your obedience, his blood was shed and his women were violated. O Allah, therefore pour heavy curses on them and chastise them with painful chastisement.

ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ ٱللهِ، ٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ سَيِّدِ ٱلأَوْصِيَاء. أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ أَمِينُ ٱللهِ وَٱبْنُ أَمِينِهِ عِشْتَ سَعِيدًا وَمَضَيْتَ حَمِيدًا وَمُتَّ فَقِيدًا مَظْلُومًا شَهِيدا

Assalāmu ʿalayka yab-na rasūlillāh. Assalāmu ʿalayka yab-na sayyidil-awṣiyāʾ. Ashhadu annaka amīnul-lāhi wab-nu amīnih, ʿishta saʿīdan wa maḍayta ḥamīdan wa mutta faqīdan maẓlūman shahīdā.

Peace be upon you, O son of Allah's Messenger. Peace be upon you, O son of the chief of the Prophets' successors. I bear witness that you are verily the trustee of Allah and the son of His trustee. You lived with happiness, passed away with praiseworthiness, and died as one who is missed, oppressed, and martyred.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ ٱللهَ مُنْجِزٌ مَا وَعَدَكَ وَمُهْلِكٌ مَنْ خَذَلَكَ وَمُعَذِّبٌ مَنْ قَتَلَك. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ وَفَيْتَ بِعَهْدِ ٱللهِ وَجَاهَدْتَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ حَتَّىٰ أَتَاكَ ٱلْيَقِين

Wa ashhadu annal-lāha munjizun mā waʿadaka wa muhlikun man khadhalaka wa muʿadhdhibun man qatalak. Wa ashhadu annaka wafayta biʿahdil-lāhi wa jāhadta fī sabīlihi ḥattā atākal-yaqīn.

I bear witness that Allah shall inevitably fulfill His promise to you, exterminate those who disappointed you, and chastise those who slew you. I also bear witness that you fulfilled your pledge to Allah and strove hard in His way until death came upon you.

فَلَعَنَ ٱللهُ مَنْ قَتَلَكَ وَلَعَنَ ٱللهُ مَنْ ظَلَمَكَ وَلَعَنَ ٱللهُ أُمَّةً سَمِعَتْ بِذٰلِكَ فَرَضِيَتْ بِه. ٱللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أُشْهِدُكَ أَنِّي وَلِيٌّ لِمَنْ وَالَاهُ وَعَدُوٌّ لِمَنْ عَادَاه

Falaʿanal-lāhu man qatalaka wa laʿanal-lāhu man ẓalamaka Wa laʿanal-lāhu ummatan samiʿat bidhālika faraḍiyat bih. Allāhumma innī ushhiduka annī waliyyun liman wālāhu wa ʿaduwwun liman ʿādāh.

So, may Allah curse those who slew you, may Allah curse those who oppressed you, may Allah curse the people who, when informed about that, were pleased with it. O Allah, be my witness that I am loyal to those who are loyal to him and enemy of those who are his enemies.

بِأَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ ٱللهِ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ كُنْتَ نُورًا فِي ٱلْأَصْلَابِ ٱلشَّامِخَة، وَٱلْأَرْحَامِ ٱلْمُطَهَّرَة. لَمْ تُنَجِّسْكَ ٱلْجَاهِلِيَّةُ بِأَنْجَاسِهَا وَلَمْ تُلْبِسْكَ ٱلْمُدْلَهِمَّاتُ مِنْ ثِيَابِهَا

Biʾabī anta wa ummī yab-na rasūlillāh. Ashhadu annaka kunta nūran fil-aṣlābish-shāmikhah, wal-arḥāmil-muṭahharah. Lam tunajjiskal-jāhiliyyatu biʾanjāsiha wa lam tulbiskal-mudlahimmātu min thiyābihā.

May my father and mother be accepted as ransoms for you, O son of Allah's Messenger. I bear witness that you were light in the sublime loins and purified wombs; you were free from all the impurities of the Era of Ignorance for no filth could touch you or come near you.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ مِنْ دَعَائِمِ ٱلدِّينِ وَأَرْكَانِ ٱلْمُسْلِمِين، وَمَعْقِلِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِين. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ ٱلْإِمَامُ ٱلْبَرُّ ٱلتَّقِيّ، ٱلرَّضِيُّ ٱلزَّكِيُّ ٱلْهَادِيُ ٱلْمَهْدِيُّ

Wa ashhadu annaka min daʿāʾimid-dīni wa arkānil-muslimīn, wa maʿqilil-muʾminīn. Wa ashhadu annakal-Imāmul-barrut-taqiyy, ar-raḍiyyuz-zakiyy, alhādil-Mahdiyy.

I also bear witness that you are one of the pillars of the religion, a strong support of the Muslims, and the haven of the believers. I also bear witness that you are the God-fearing, pious, pleased, immaculate, guide, and rightly guided Imām.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ ٱلْأَئِمَّةَ مِنْ وُلْدِكَ كَلِمَةُ ٱلتَّقْوَىٰ وَأَعْلَامُ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَٱلْعُرْوَةُ ٱلْوُثْقَىٰ وَٱلْحُجَّةُ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ ٱلدُّنْيَا

Wa ashhadu annal-aʾimmata min wuldika kalimatut-taqwā wa aʿlāmul-hudā wal-ʿurwatul wuthqā wal-ḥujjatu ʿalā ahlid-dunyā.

And I bear witness that the Imāms from your progeny are the spokesmen of piety, the signs of guidance, the firmest handle (of Islam), and the proof over the inhabitants of this world.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَبِإِيَابِكُمْ مُوقِنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَخَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي. وَقَلْبِي لِقَلْبِكُمْ سِلْمٌ وَأَمْرِي لِأَمْرِكُمْ مُتَّبِعٌ وَنُصْرَتِي لَكُمْ مُعَدَّةٌ حَتَّىٰ يَأْذَنَ ٱللهُ لَكُمْ

Wa ashhadu annī bikum muʾminun wa biʾiyābikum mūqinun bisharāʾiʿi dīnī wa khawātīmi ʿamalī, wa qalbī liqalbikum silmun wa amrī liʾamrikum muttabiʿun wa nuṣratī lakum muʿaddatun ḥattā yaʾdhanal-lāhu lakum.

I also bear witness that I believe in you and in your return, I have full confidence in the laws of my religion and in the seals of my deeds, my heart is at peace with you. All my affairs are based on your commands, and my support for you is already all set to when Allah gives you permission.

فَمَعَكُمْ مَعَكُمْ لَا مَعَ عَدُوِّكُمْ. صَلَوَاتُ ٱللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَرْوَاحِكُمْ وَأَجْسَادِكُمْ وَشَاهِدِكُمْ وَغَائِبِكُمْ وَظَاهِرِكُمْ وَبَاطِنِكُمْ آمِينَ رَبَّ ٱلْعَالَمِينَ

Famaʿakum maʿakum lā maʿa ʿadduwwikum. Ṣalawātul-lāhi ʿalaykum, wa ʿalā arwāḥikum wa ajsādikum, wa shāhidikum wa ghāʾibikum, wa ẓāhirikum wa bāṭinikum. Āmīna rabbal-ʿālamīn.

So, I am with you, (and always) with you, not with your enemies. May Allah's blessings be upon you, upon your souls, your bodies, upon the present and the absent from you, and upon the apparent and the hidden from you. Respond to us, O Lord of the Worlds.

It was the year 201 AH, and 17 years had passed since the martyrdom of Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (ʿa). His son, Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa) served as the Divine leader and guide for the people during a tumultuous time that was ripe with political rancor. The Abbasid Caliph, Maʾmūn, who was the son of Hārūn ar-Rashīd, had grown weary and increasingly fearful of the popularity that the 8th Imām, Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa), had in the city of Medina. Imām ar-Riḍā's (ʿa) popularity meant that he could be an influential figurehead for the rise of the then ʿAlawī movement against the Abbasids. The ʿAlawīs were individuals who believed leadership should be in the hands of the Imāms (ʿa). Maʾmūn understood Imām's (ʿa) potential influence against his interests and wanted to use him (ʿa) to his own favor which would at the same time result in silencing the ʿAlawī group's objections and protests. Thus, he eventually forced Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa) to abandon the city of the Prophet (ṣ), and join the Caliph in the city of Marv, which is in modern day Turkmenistan. Though the land is modern day Turkmenistan, in history this was known as Khorasan which was a much larger province at that time encompassing Turkmenistan and Afghanistan within it.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN

Maʾmūn though was hated by both the ʿAlawīs and Abbasid groups, because he killed his own brother Amīn who was regarded as a noble from the Abbasid bloodline. Thus, the best way for Maʾmūn to buy some time for his legitimacy as a leader was to bring the Imām (ʿa) to Maʾmūn's palace and give the Imām (ʿa) a position–al-beit entirely for political and implicit motives. Hence once Maʾmūn makes Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa) as his crown prince, Maʾmūn puts a halt to the ʿAlawī's protests and objections to his leadership for the time being. However, Maʾmūn did not stop there; within two years, he murdered the Imām (ʿa) to capture popularity among the Abbasids as Maʾmūn was on his way to Baghdad where he stayed for the remainder of his time. By murdering the Imām (ʿa), he was able to gain the trust of the Abbasids once more.

The Imām (ʿa) had to make this lengthy journey that Maʾmūn ordered which took several months, and Maʾmūn's assigned escorts for the Imām (ʿa) strictly prevented him from traveling through certain cities like Kūfah because there was a strong presence of the Shīʿah of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) there. A strong supportive presence for the Imām (ʿa) could potentially lead to trouble for Maʾmūn who desired complete control, so he was sure to close off any possibility of Imām ar-Riḍā's (ʿa) influence. During their journey, Imām's (ʿa) caravan passed by numerous cities such as Baṣrah, Ahwāz, Yazd, Nīshāpūr, Ṭūs, Sarakhs, and Marv. In every city that the Imām (ʿa) stopped, he would interact cordially with its residents. One of the cities that the Imām (ʿa) stopped in was Nīshāpūr.

Nīshāpūr was one of the major cities of Islamic learning at that time, and had a large population of *ḥadīth* scholars and jurists. After remaining in this city for a short while, Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa) was made to travel to Marv where Maʾmūn was located.

On his departure from Nīshāpūr, numerous residents and scholars gathered around the Imām (ʿa), insisting that he cannot depart from them until he transmits some words of wisdom from the Noble Prophet (ṣ).

It was at this point that Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa), who was sitting inside of a camel-borne sedan on his ride, pulled aside the curtains of his camel-borne sedan and said: *"I heard from my father, Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar - who heard from his father, Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad - who heard from his father, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī - who heard from his father, ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn - who heard from his father, Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī - who heard from his father, the Commander of the Faithful, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib - who said that he heard from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his household - who said he heard from Jibrāʾīl - who said that he heard Allah, the Exalted say:*

إِنِّي أَنَا الله لاَ إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا، فَاعْبُدُونِي، مَنْ جَاءَ مِنْكُمْ بِشَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الله بِالإِخْلاَصِ؛ دَخَلَ فِي حِصْنِي، وَمَنْ دَخَلَ فِي حِصْنِي أَمِنَ مِنْ عَذَابِي.

"Verily, I am Allah, and there is no god but Me; therefore, serve Me. Whoever bears true witness that there is no god but Allah shall enter My Fortress, and whoever enters My Fortress is safe from My Chastisement."

"When the convoy began to move, the Imām (ʿa) continued:

"However, there are a few conditions that entitle a person to enter into this fortress, and I am one of those conditions."[1]

This event became one of the most documented events in the journey of the 8th Imām (ʿa) - witnessed by thousands of people - and this narration itself came to be known as *The Golden Chain Narration*. Why was this event called *'The Golden Chain Narration'* by later scholars and the Shīʿah community? In this narration, Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa) transmitted a Prophetic tradition, citing a chain of narrators that consisted of all of the Imāms (ʿa) before him, beginning from his father, going through his grandfather, and great-grandfathers, all the way through to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), then Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), ultimately to the Noble Prophet (ṣ) himself who transmitted it from Jibrāʾīl, who was taught it directly from Allah (swt), the Majestic.

A very significant point that we also learn from this famous incident is that Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa) very clearly and explicitly pointed to his own authority. He told the people that simply uttering a statement professing the Oneness of Allah (swt) is not enough to be given salvation and free entrance into the fortress of the Almighty. Rather, there are conditions to this, and the Imām (ʿa) informed the public that he himself was one of these conditions; therefore implying that anyone who knowingly rejects or usurps the rights of any of the Divinely-appointed 12 Imāms (ʿa) will be deprived of salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

In addition to the sources cited in the footnotes, this article is a compilation of two articles from Al-Islam.org linked below. We would also like to give a special thanks to Shaykh Ehsan Ahmadi who has provided valuable insights.

https://www.al-islam.org/media/golden-narration-imam-al-ridha-city-neyshabour

https://www.al-islam.org/fourteen-luminaries-islam-ahmad-ahmadi-birjandi/tenth-infallible-hadhrat-imam-ali-b-musa-al-ridha

1 Ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, Kitāb at-Tawhīd, Ch. 1, Ḥadīth #22 and #23; Shaykh Ṣadūq, ʿUyūn Akhbār ar-Riḍā, Vol. 1, P. 143.

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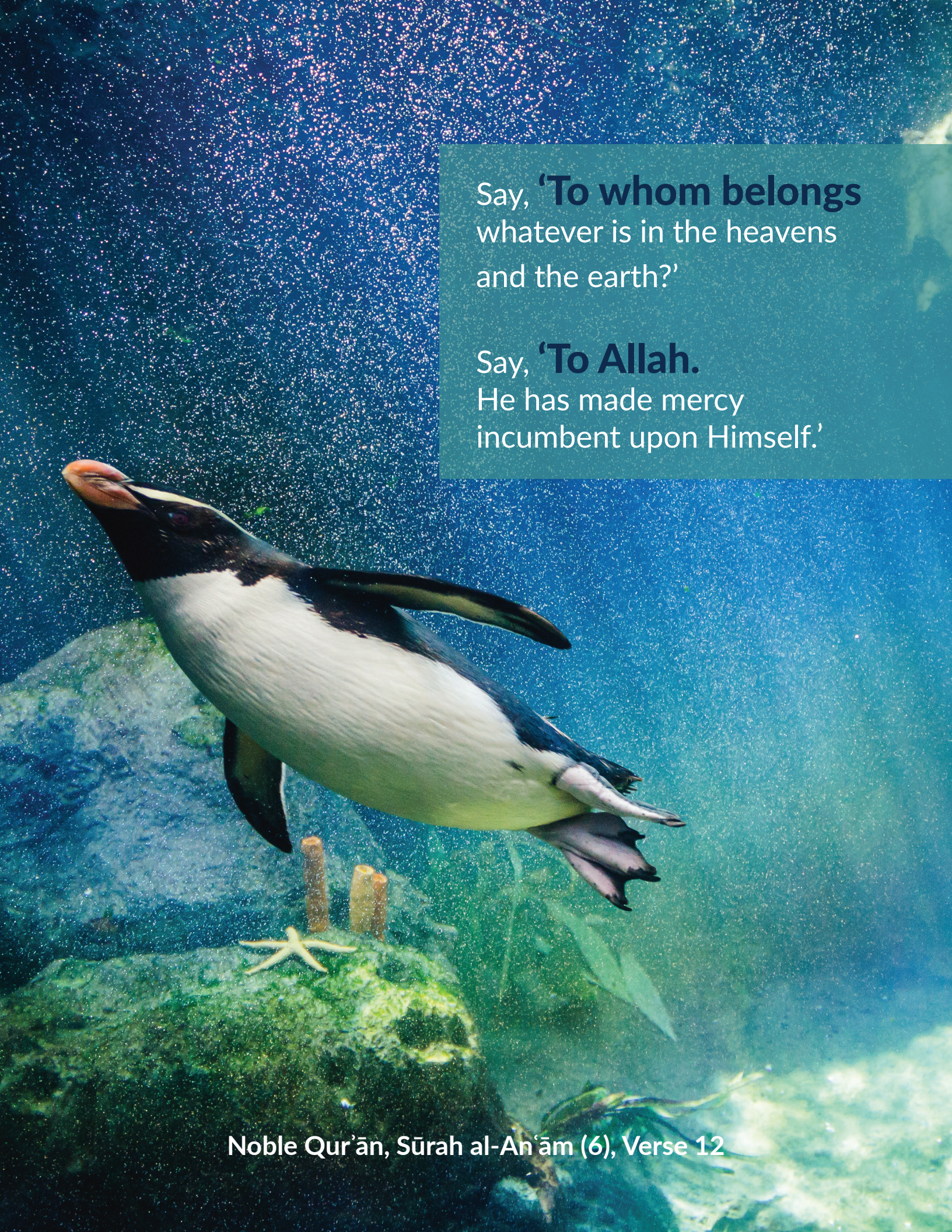

Say, **‘To whom belongs**
whatever is in the heavens
and the earth?’

Say, **‘To Allah.**
He has made mercy
incumbent upon Himself.’

Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anʿām (6), Verse 12

Transliteration Guide

Arabic terms in this magazine have been transliterated according to the following guidelines:

ء	a, i, or u (initial form)	ظ	ẓ
ء	ʾ (medial or final form)	ع	ʿ
ا	a	غ	gh
ب	b	ف	f
ت	t	ق	q
ث	th	ك	k
ج	j	ل	l
ح	ḥ	م	m
خ	j	ن	n
د	d	ه	h
ذ	dh	و	w
ر	r	ي	y
ز	z	ة	h (without iḍāfah)
س	s	ة	t (with iḍāfah)
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ	ـَـ	a
ض	ḍ	ـِـ	i
ط	ṭ	ـُـ	u

Glossary

Taslīm: submission

Iṭāʿah: obedience

Ḥusn al-Ẓan: a positive outlook

Next Issue

The Truth